

Delta power plant to reduce work force

DELTA — Officials of the Intermountain Power Service Corp. plan to reduce the power plant's work force by offering employees retirement incentives. IPSC operates the Intermountain Power Plant near Delta.

Officials announced employees with five years of service and age 55 or over are eligible for retirement under the new program. "We hope to accomplish the reductions through voluntary acceptance of a one-time retirement enhancement program and severance plan," said S. Gale Chapman, plant manager.

He said the reduction will allow the firm to remain competitive in an open supplier market, noting it

is the result of deregulation of the power industry.

Millard County officials say there isn't a threat of the plant closing but the County Commission and area business owners are concerned. Commission Chairman Tony Dearden said an economic loss to the county is expected because of the reduction.

Business revenue will be adversely affected and will be even more serious if additional layoffs are forthcoming. Chapman said the 10 percent reduction in the staff will leave the corporation with a minimum number of personnel needed to accomplish the work, however.

Concern was also voiced by Evan Maxfield, president of the Delta Area Chamber of Commerce, who also suggested more emphasis be placed on recruiting new businesses to the area.

Chapman reported the corporation has 554 employees in Utah, located in Delta and Springville.

It was noted that deregulated open access to retail power customers will be available as of January 1, 1998. Chapman foresees continued power generation at the Intermountain Power Plant along with transmission facilities.

Officials say IPP will continue as a viable power producer. Most of the power generated at IPP is used in California.



Panel blocks development of 4 copper mines

Associated Press

A federal panel has blocked development of four open-pit copper mines in southeastern Utah.

Federal officials approved the mining March 26, but that decision was appealed by a group of Moab residents called the Protect Our Resources Coalition. It claimed the project provided too little protection for groundwater at the site 18 miles southeast of LaSal in the Lisbon Valley.

The coalition also alleged a number of problems with the environmental-impact statement done on the project. Its attorney, Jay Tutchtton, also claimed there was a secret deal between mine sponsor Summo USA Corp. and the Bureau of Land Management.

The Interior Board of Land Appeals, which serves as an adminis-

trative court within the Department of Interior, ruled Monday the residents raised enough concerns to justify a stay preventing Denver-based Summo from beginning work on the mine until all of the issues are heard. Work on roads and other related facilities can proceed, however.

IBLA has a huge backlog of cases, and decisions in cases such as this often take years.

"We're disappointed," said BLM Moab district manager Kate Kitchell. "We made a solid decision that ensures environmental protection while allowing Summo to move forward with mining."

Gregory Hahn, president and chief executive officer of Summo, said the delay could endanger efforts to complete financing for the mine.

Tutchtton said the secret deal is mentioned in documents obtained from the government through the Freedom of Information Act. They show that Summo had two mine proposals pending last year — one in Lisbon Valley and the other near Taos, N.M. The project in Taos was causing controversy and opposed by BLM officials.

Documents show Summo on Dec. 17, 1996, offered to abandon the New Mexico project in return for ownership of all federal land at the proposed Lisbon Valley mine. The attorney argues this negotiation, which did not become public until after the mine was approved, tainted the process by encouraging BLM to approve the Lisbon Valley project regardless of the environmental consequences.

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